

BALTIMORE CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

COVID-19 Provider Updates

November 12, 2020

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COVID-19 Quick Hits

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New State of Emergency

1. Given the rise in community transmission of COVID-19, Governor Hogan has renewed the state of emergency in Maryland but is allowing local jurisdictions to decide how best to manage the pandemic based on their case data.

2. Baltimore City now requires that masks are worn in all outdoor spaces, regardless of social distancing, and that businesses and restaurants must revert back to Phase 1 guidelines, meaning capacity inside has resumed to 25%.
3. [Link](#) to podcast with Baltimore City Health Commissioner, Dr. Letitia Dzirasa on COVID-19 fatigue and community transmission.

Recovery and Isolation

1. Baltimore Convention Center Field Hospital is a well-equipped setting for patients who require extra support as they convalesce from COVID-19. See [here](#) to find out if this option should be used for your patients who are medically complicated and vulnerable if recovering at home unmonitored, but not ill enough to require acute hospital care.
2. **Baltimore Convention Center also offers free walk-in or by appointment COVID-19 testing** for all persons regardless of insurance status or whether or not they have symptoms. Hours are **8 am-2 pm on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Baltimore Convention Center. Free parking and language interpreters available.** No provider order is needed.
3. The CDC has [updated guidance](#) regarding discontinuing home isolation based on being symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (reduced from 72 hours).
4. The [Triage, Respite, and Isolation \(TRI\) Center](#) at Lord Baltimore Hotel is still accepting provider- or self-referrals for people unable to safely self-isolate at home.

Vaccines

1. ***NEW UPDATE*** The United States currently does not have an approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19. There may be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines before the end of 2020, but supply will continually increase in the weeks and months that follow. Please click [here](#) for more info from the CDC.
2. ***NEW UPDATE*** The World Health Organization also has guidance on the COVID-19 vaccine (click [here](#)) and vaccine research and development (click [here](#)). They postulate that a safe and effective vaccine is estimated to be ready for distribution in early to mid 2021.

Testing and Reporting

1. ***NEW UPDATE*** Since March 2020, Maryland has experienced a **40% decline in the reported diagnosis of active tuberculosis (TB)**. Providers are encouraged to consider TB when performing diagnostic workups for any individual who is at risk for TB and presenting with respiratory symptoms common to both TB and COVID-19, especially those who have already tested negative for COVID-19.
2. ***NEW UPDATE*** As we enter the flu season, it is more important than ever to encourage patients to get their flu vaccine. While it does not prevent COVID-19, the flu may cause severe illness which can further overwhelm our healthcare system struggling to manage the pandemic. Please read more [here](#).

3. ***NEW UPDATE*** The [CDC's Diagnostic Multiplex Assay](#) is a single test that can diagnose infection caused by one of three viruses: SARS-CoV-2, influenza A, and influenza B. It is used by public health laboratories and is not given to clinicians, hospitals, or healthcare professionals directly. The CDC is working with states to allocate multiplex kits to their local public health laboratories.
4. ***NEW UPDATE*** The CDC has **updated the definition of a close contact** to someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person with COVID-19 for a **cumulative total of 15 minutes**, including resulting from brief exposures that ultimately add up to 15 minutes within a 24 hour period. Please click [here](#) for more info.
5. ***NEW UPDATE*** The Pimlico testing site has closed and is no longer operating.
6. ***REMINDER*** **Please inform your patients who are positive for COVID-19 that the health department will be calling them** to conduct contact tracing. When the phone rings, the caller ID will read **"MD COVID" (240-466-4488)**. The health department will never ask for your patient's social security number, financial information, or their immigration status.

Seen previously

1. Everyone tested at BCHD mobile sites will receive their results via a phone call from the BCHD call team. At that point, they can request a pdf copy of the laboratory result via email, or a paper copy mailed to their address. Depending on the laboratory used for testing, people tested through BCHD will receive paper instructions on how/when to create an account via online lab portal (e.g. Cian, Lab Corp). The instructions for online lab portal creation can also be sent via the BCHD call team. If people are having trouble getting results, then they can call the BCHD COVID call center at **443-984-8650**. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am-6 pm and Saturday 9 am-1 pm.
2. If your office is contracting with a commercial lab to conduct COVID testing, ensure that the laboratory you have contracted with is approved by the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) for COVID testing, and has received a Maryland COVID number. Click [here](#) for a list of approved laboratories.
3. Please click [here](#) to refer to Maryland Department of Health's new interim guidance for use of COVID-19 Point of Care testing for diagnostic or screening purposes and for interpretation of the results.
4. The Maryland Department of Health has also released an updated list of devices approved for Point of Care testing in their amended directive regarding healthcare matters. Please click [here](#) to view other updates in this directive and click [here](#) to view their latest clinician letter containing more guidance on testing.
5. [COVID-19 is a reportable disease](#). Point-of-care test results can be updated through [CRISP](#) (if not already reporting to the Maryland Health Dept via another mechanism). [Providers are also required to report](#) COVID-19 cases by completing a case

report form ([Form 1140](#)), which can be faxed to the Baltimore City Health Department at 410-625-0688.

6. See [here](#) for Baltimore City test site information including sites where patients can self-schedule testings, without a provider's referral.
7. Please refer to the Maryland Department of Health website for the most recent [testing priorities](#) when ordering COVID-19 testing. CDC has released [recommendations](#) regarding antibody testing.
8. Maryland Department of Health has updated its [COVID-19 test site website](#) with a "Find a testing site near you" feature to search by an address.

On Oct 1, the Maryland Department of Health updated answers to the most frequently asked testing questions [here](#). You can direct your patients to this information.

Frequently Requested Resources

1. **Physician Support:** For free & confidential peer-to-peer provider calls dial 1(888)409-0141 open 7 days a week from 8am - 12am EST, or click [here](#).
2. **CHARMcare:** Our Community Resource Database can be found [here](#). If you have any resources that you would like to see in CHARMcare, please e-mail Charmcare@baltimorecity.gov and Lindsay.Adams@baltimorecity.gov
3. **COVIDView:** A Weekly Surveillance Summary of U.S. COVID-19 Activity can be found [here](#).
4. **FAQs:** Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
5. **COVID-19 forecasts:** National and State forecasts of cumulative deaths due to COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
6. **COVID-19 literature:** A summary of recently published articles focusing on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
7. **CDC Training for Healthcare Professionals:** A hub of CDC webinars on COVID-19 Clinical Care & Infection control, PPE Donning & Doffing, Emergency Preparedness and Response can be found [here](#).
8. **Volunteer Staffing Opportunities:** information on the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRMRC) can be found [here](#).
9. **Employment Opportunities:** Job requests for healthcare professionals and support staff can be found [here](#). Baltimore City Health Corps contact tracing and related job postings can be found [here](#).
10. **PPE Request Process:**
 - Complete the MDH Emergency Medical Materials Request [Form](#).
 - Send the request form to MedResourceRequest@baltimorecity.gov.

- BCHD staff will contact you directly to discuss the specifics of your request. Please allow up to 48 hours for review and processing.
- If BCHD is able to fulfill your request, you will be asked to designate a facility representative we can work with to coordinate pick-up of the supplies. Your delivery driver will be required to show a facility ID badge

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